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REVIEW

✓ **THE GENUS SELAGINELLA IN TROPICAL SOUTH AMERICA**, by A. H. G. Alston, A. C. Jermy, and J. M. Rankin. *Bull. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.), bot. ser.* 9(4):233-330. 1981. £14.00 postpaid.—A. H. G. Alston was the premier *Selaginella* authority in the middle of this century. He published extensively on the genus in the Old World and in southern South America, Brazil, the West Indies, and Central America in the New World. At the time of his death, he had begun to study *Selaginella* from the Andean countries and the Guyanas. The present paper completes and extends Alston's work and includes Brazil, thus accounting for virtually all of tropical South America. The region contains 133 species and six infraspecific taxa of *Selaginella*. A table of species distribution by countries shows that Colombia has by far the greatest number of species. The bracketed key to the species can be read forward or backward, a decided advantage because there are no species descriptions. Each taxon treated has a synonymy, a statement of range, a list of specimens, and, sometimes, additional notes. The authors have uncovered some overlooked synonyms in rare literature, always a pleasure to see. However, most synonyms state only the country where the type was collected, rather than the type locality, the collector and number, and the herbarium of deposit. A list of references and an index to accepted names and synonyms concludes the volume. New taxa are illustrated by a photograph of the herbarium sheet and by SEM photographs of the leaves, which range in magnification upwards from a mere eight times natural size, a useful technique for illustrating clearly the cilia and other small details of the leaves. This paper is indispensable for identifying *Selaginellas* from tropical America and will be the standard reference for many years to come.—D.B.L.